

Duncan, Patrick

Oct 1915



October 4th, 1915

Patrick Duncan, Esq., C.M.G., M.P.,

Pretoria, S.A.

Dear Mr. Duncan:

Perhaps you do not remember me, but I remember you well in Edinburgh, and have since followed your career with a great deal of interest. Lord Milner has spoken in the warmest terms of you on more than one occasion during his visits to Toronto, and Lionel Curtis has told me several times of the great work that you are doing for South Africa. This has been to me a matter of much gratification.

Will you allow me to ask you to do me a favour? Last spring we lost a strong man from our department of English. He was a graduate of Edinburgh and Oxford, George S. Stevenson. We have not yet filled the vacancy, but to-day Professor Alexander, the head of the Department of English has brought me an application from Professor John Purvis of the University in Pretoria. He seems to be a man of high attainments, and as far as we can judge from his testimonials he has many of the qualifications that we require. Can you give me any information about Professor Purvis? How does he do as a teacher? How does he get on with his colleagues? Has he any interests beyond the narrow academic range? The opening here is a good one, but Stevenson is a hard man to follow, and we do not wish to make any mistake.

You have gone through a very trying experience in South Africa, and I hope now that your elections will come out on the



Right side, at least what seems to us to be the right side. Of course the war absorbs our interests. Already we have over 1200 graduates and undergraduates at the front. We have a Hospital of 1040 beds, and between 50 and 60 of our teaching staff are on active service. The attendance of students in the session which is just opening seems to be very good, though there is nothing like the ordinary spirit about the place.

With kind regards, I am,

Yours sincerely,

President.

